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U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Northern District of Georgia
Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee

1991 Law Enforcement Plan

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LAW ENFORCEMENT PLAN

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

LAW ENFORCEMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

LAW ENFORCEMENT PLAN

FOR THE

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

The Northern District of Georgia is comprised of 46 counties in the northern portion of the state. It includes Rome, Gainesville, Newnan, and the Metropolitan Atlanta area.

The United States Attorney's Office is located in Atlanta at the Richard B. Russell Federal Building. Joe D. Whitley, the current United States Attorney, was appointed by the President in July of 1990. The office is comprised of 55 Assistant United States Attorneys and 64 support staff personnel. The United States Attorney is responsible for enforcing federal criminal laws in the District and in representing the interests of the United States in civil proceedings. To carry out its mission, the office is organized into three divisions - Criminal Division, Civil Division, and the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force.

The Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (LECC) is chaired by the United States Attorney and is managed by the LECC Coordinator. The LECC Coordinator's responsibility is to improve cooperation and coordination among federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, to coordinate resources available at all levels of government and to provide resources where needed, to provide training to law enforcement officers, and to enhance the effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

The LECC works through the district law enforcement plan. The LECC Coordinator is responsible for forming working subcommittees to assist law enforcement agencies in dealing with those problems. The LECC Coordinator also is responsible for implementation of the Attorney General's Guidelines for Seized and Forfeited Property, and handles all equitable sharing cases in the District.

Drug Trafficking

Drug trafficking continues to be the chief crime problem in the District. Prosecution of drug trafficking offenses will remain the highest priority in the office.

Metropolitan areas in this District, especially the metropolitan Atlanta area, have experienced increases in the trafficking of methamphetamine and cocaine, especially crack cocaine. Trafficking patterns have shifted from one of aircraft smuggling to wholesale and retail distribution sometimes involving youthful offenders and foreign nationals. This office intends to center on cocaine/crack distribution organizations.

Closely related to the prosecution of drug trafficking are investigations of money laundering and currency violations. Recent events suggest this District is emerging as a money laundering center for international drug traffickers. The Atlanta Organized

Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force will continue to spearhead this District's investigation of international money laundering rings.

Asset Forfeiture

In January, 1989, this office created an Asset Forfeiture Unit whose primary purpose is to utilize the federal forfeiture statutes to seize the assets acquired, derived, or used in criminal activities. For Fiscal 1990, the Asset Forfeiture Unit seized more than $10.5 million from a variety of sources reflecting criminal activity. There are presently over 150 statutes available for federal prosecutors to utilize in forfeiture actions. Forfeiture has proven to be an extremely successful tool when pursued collectively with narcotic prosecutions. It will remain a priority in this office.

Public Corruption

Public corruption continues to be a significant and recurring concern in the District. A number of major prosecutions by this office during recent years have served to heighten public awareness of corrupt practices by certain public officials. They have also served to increase public demands that law enforcement authorities, expressly federal authorities, increase efforts and expand resources in addressing corrupt practices.

In 1988, this office created a Public Corruption Unit, combining resources from this office as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Internal Revenue Service, in a joint task force approach to public corruption investigations.

This office will continue to review zoning proceedings in the greater Atlanta area for improprieties. Outside of metropolitan Atlanta, investigation of corrupt practices by state and local authorities will also be continued.

Economic or White Collar Offenses

Economic or "white collar" offenses are a high priority in the District. Special emphasis is currently being given in concentrating efforts to prosecute financial institution fraud and fraud against the government.

Prosecution of bank fraud cases is the top priority of the office's Fraud Section. This office recognizes an obligation to protect the public and financial institutions against fraudulent activities. In 1989, a Bank Fraud Working Group, consisting of representatives from the Office of Thrift Supervision, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Resolution Trust Corporation, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and other bank regulatory agencies was organized. Together with the FBI and the U. S. Attorney's Office, the working group shares information and coordinates efforts in preventing and detecting fraudulent banking activities.

In addition to pursuing major bank fraud cases, this office prosecutes through its "Fast Track" program bank employees who abuse their positions of trust by embezzling or stealing bank funds.

Fraud relating to the student loan programs administered by the Department of Education and loan programs coordinated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development has been on the increase. Recent evidence reflects an increase of fraudulent practices by proprietary schools, particularly in the failure to make refunds, falsifying attendance records, and the conversion of federal funds. Abuses in Federal Housing Authority insured housing programs involving "straw borrowers," submission of false closing documents, the use of inflated appraisals and financial statements, are a recurring problem. This office will continue to work closely with Inspectors General from DOE and HUD in prosecuting program abuses.

A more recent concern is the safeguarding of pension and welfare benefits funds. Investigations have uncovered abuses in the area of privately funded ERISA pension and medical benefit plans. Evidence suggests embezzlements by service providers and other fiduciaries are increasing. There is concern that the proliferation of Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements (MEWA) can, absent federal oversight, result in catastrophic losses to individual employees.

Other areas of attention by this office will relate to environmental crimes, large scale consumer fraud, defense procurement fraud, and tax violations.

Organized Crime Strike Force

In January, 1990, the Organized Crime Strike Force was incorporated into the United States Attorney's Office. This incorporation will serve to streamline dealings with the Department of Justice and enhance joint efforts with state and local law enforcement agencies in investigating criminal enterprises.

The Strike Force has successfully prosecuted criminal enterprises which have used racketeering proceeds to infiltrate legitimate businesses by obtaining convictions and criminal forfeitures.

Traditional organized crime continues to launder criminal proceeds into this District's economy, through real estate developments and particularly into the hospitality industry such as restaurants, bars and nightclubs.

Labor racketeering, including union corruption and corrupt labor management relations, remains a Strike Force priority. This District has experienced a trend toward increased abuses in employee welfare benefit plans and abuses involving insurance plan administrators, plan trustees and service providers. Plan participants are charging higher premiums for fewer benefits due to illegal commissions and kickbacks paid to influence the award

of inflated contracts. The Strike Force will continue to focus its efforts in these areas.

Federal Firearm Violations

This office has recently prioritized the prosecution of federal firearm violations. The office will prosecute, whenever appropriate, violations imposing mandatory sentences for the use or possession of firearms during and in relation to a narcotics offense or other crimes of violence. In addition, the office has initiated an effort to prosecute career criminals under the Armed Career Criminal Act. Working in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms we will seek out and prosecute dangerous felons who carry firearms. It is our hope and intention, through the use of the Armed Career Criminal Act, to reduce the violent crime rate in select areas of metropolitan Atlanta.

National Park Service

This office recognizes an obligation to protect the public's right of access and enjoyment of recreational areas set aside by the National Park Service. In recent years National Recreation Areas in the District have experienced an increase in criminal activity, especially offenses involving sexual solicitation and assault.

This office is committed in ensuring the safety of families and children at federal parks. In conjunction with the National Park Service we have aggressively prosecuted and sought and obtained significant fines and jail sentences for those defendants engaged in violent behavior at our National Recreation Areas.

Other Priorities

This District continues to experience offenses involving thefts of goods in interstate transportation, ranging from automobile engines to dry roasted peanuts. In conjunction with the FBI and local authorities, we will continue to prosecute all interstate thefts meeting federal threshold requirements.

Other priorities include civil rights violations, child pornography cases, and bank robberies. Moreoever, the increased development and prosecution of civil fraud and False Claims Act cases will remain a top priority for this District.